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THE ALLIED ARTS

When men so well informed and closely in touch with current conditions as Thomas R. Kimball, Edwin H. Blashfield, Hermon A. MacNeil and H. Van Buren Magonigle report that they find in recent American architecture so little evidence of collaborative effort of architect, sculptor and painter that they, as a committee, hesitate to proceed on the basis that their arts are allied in anything but name, it would seem time to call a halt and make a survey.

As every one knows the best monumental work can only be attained through collaboration. If the painters, the sculptors, the architects, and even the craftsmen, of to-day are not working in unison we shall gradually if not swiftly fail miserably in our effort toward artistic achievement. And yet from the reports rendered recently to the Annual Convention of the American Institute of Architects by not only the committee of which Mr. Kimball was chairman, but by the Committee on Education, and from what we can see ourselves, it would seem that this deplorable condition is true.

In the great World's Fair at Chicago the arts were allied in fact as well as in word, and what was the result-a magnificent consummation and epoch-making work of art. In the erection of certain great public buildings, painters and sculptors have been called into consultation with architects and have contributed largely to the ultimate beauty of result. But as a rule they have been consulted last rather than first, they have been bidden to garnish, to place the outer raiment, to crown the whole, and have had little or nothing to do with providing the setting. Now this fault rests in part with the architects, though they themselves may lay not a little of it at the feet of their clients. In most instances it is as if they said to the painters and the sculptors, "Busy yourselves with your brushes and chisels until our serious business of erecting this structure is done, then you may come along with your paint pots and your modeling tools and put on the finishing touches, we will leave a space for you here and there where you may place a picture or squeeze in a figure; a bit of color and some carving will liven things up, the public will take notice and be pleased. Yes, yes, of course we could do without you; on the whole, we're not sure but that we, ourselves, prefer plain tinted walls and architectural ornament, but it's only fair to give you a chance and, as we said, you please the public."

Of course this attitude is by no means universal—sometimes the painters and sculptors do not get in at all—sometimes they are truly made collaborators. The fact is that it is a wrong idea of art—the idea that it is something superficial and non-essential.

There is also a mistaken idea that there are various kinds of art each occupying its own little field neatly picketed; that there is certain art which is beneath the dignity of artists and must therefore be left to artisans, who in truth at the present time either do not exist or have very little standing. Such was not the case at the time of the highest art achievement. The result is that the architect himself is hampered and disconcerted again and again by the incompetency, if not the non-existence, of capable craftsmen to carry out his ideas and designs.

The root of the evil, according to the report of the Committee on Education of which Mr. Ralph Adams Cram is chairman, is in the present system of edu-Again the need of vocational training, of proper instruction in industrial art, is strongly emphasized. Skilled workmen never before commanded such high wages, and yet, in but few places in this country is industrial training to be Constructive art is essentially had. healthy, and if we wish to live as an art producing as well as an art loving nation we must see to it that the present defect is remedied by every reasonable means and as rapidly as possible.

NOTES

In the annual report of the Standing Committee on Education of the American Institute of Architects read at the recent convention in Washington the following gratifying reference was made to the work of the American Federation of Arts:

"Among the various agencies making toward the education of the public rather than the profession none is more efficient than the American Federation of Arts; its activities are numerous, its enthusiasm infectious, and we earnestly be speak for it the unanimous support and co-operation of the members of the Institute."

At the close of the Convention, following a brief report by the Secretary of the Federation on the progress of its work, a resolution was passed authorizing

the Board of Directors of the Institute to recommend to its chapters not only cooperation but affiliation through chapter membership with the American Federation of Arts.

It was also resolved that the Institute should prepare and place in the hands of the Federation for circulation an illustrated lecture on Architecture. Co-operation of this kind is not only gratifying, but very stimulating.

The Allied Arts was THE A. I. A. made the special sub-CONVENTION ject of consideration at the annual convention of the American Institute of Architects which was held in Washington, December 10th, 11th and 12th. The Committee on the Allied Arts, of which Mr. Thomas R. Kimball, of Omaha, is chairman, reported that "so little evidence of the successful collaborative effort of architect, sculptor and painter was found in recent American architecture that it hesitated to proceed upon the basis that these arts are allied in anything but name." The findings of this committee were that the trouble lay in lack of special education. This conclusion was upheld by the Committee on Education, the report of which rendered by the chairman, Mr. Ralph Adams Cram, set forth with thoroughness and detail the existing conditions with regard to industrial art training in this country, which were justly termed a crying disgrace. No definite remedy was, however, offered.

The three afternoon sessions were given up to addresses, several of which were illustrated with the stereopticon, on the arts allied to architecture, by speakers who had attained eminence in their several professions. On the afternoon of the 10th, Lorado Taft gave an interesting account of "Contemporary Tendencies in Sculpture," showing illustrations of current productions in France, Germany, Italy, Belgium and England; A. Phimister Proctor spoke on "The Relation of Animal Sculpture to Architecture," and Herbert Adams on "The Relation of Sculpture to Landscape and Architecture," with special reference to